

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of Claims:

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A method for preserving and/or storing a microorganism[[s]] which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, ~~with the preservation and/or storage being effected comprising preserving and/or storing the microorganism~~ in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, ~~with wherein~~ the total aldehyde concentration ~~being is~~ in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/1 mM.

15. (Currently amended) A The method according to of claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is described by the formula III

R₆-C=O (III)

|

H

where R₆ can be substituted or unsubstituted, branched or unbranched, C₁-C₁₀-alkyl or C₂-C₁₀-alkenyl or substituted or unsubstituted aryl or hetaryl.

16. (Currently amended) A The method according to of claim 14, wherein the preservation step is carried out before the cells are treated with a reactant whose reaction is to be catalyzed by the cells.

17. (Currently amended) A The method according to of claim 14, wherein the aqueous medium comprises a total concentration of at least one cyanide compound[[s,]] selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, ~~which wherein the total concentration of said cyanide compound~~ is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration or wherein the aqueous medium does not comprise any additions of said cyanide compounds.

18. (Currently amended) A The method according to of claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is selected from the group comprising consisting of unsubstituted benzaldehyde and substituted benzaldehydes.

19. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the species of the Enterobacteriaceae or Nocardiaceae family.

20. (Currently amended) A The method according to of claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group of the species consisting of Pseudomonas, Burkholderia, Nocardia, Acetobacter, Gluconobacter, Corynebacterium, Brevibacterium, Bacillus, Clostridium, Cyanobacter, Staphylococcus, Aerobacter, Alcaligenes, Rhodococcus and Penicillium.

21. (Currently amended) A The method according to of claim 14, wherein the method is combined with comprising at least one further method step for stabilizing, preserving and/or storing enzymes, with said methods being wherein said at least one further step is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) adding at least one inorganic salt at a concentration of at least 100 mM;
- b) adding metal salts whose metal cation functions as a nitrilase prosthetic group; and
- c) adding nitriles and/or amides.

22. (Withdrawn) A preparation for preserving and/or storing microorganisms which exhibit at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, with the preparation comprising

- a) at least one aldehyde having a total aldehyde concentration in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l, and
- b) cyanide compounds, selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, at a total concentration which is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration.

23. (Currently amended) A The preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22, wherein said preparation does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds.

24. (Withdrawn) A foodstuff, feedstuff, pharmaceutical or fine chemical produced from preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22.

25. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing recombinant proteins, enzymes or fine chemicals using a preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22 or a preparation thereof.

26. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing carboxylic acids and/or amides, comprising the following steps:

- a) culturing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity,
- b) adding at least one aldehyde, with the total aldehyde concentration being in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l and storing at 0°C to 20°C until being used in step (c),
- c) bringing the aldehyde-treated preparation of said microorganisms into contact with at least one nitrile and converting said nitrile into a carboxylic acid and/or an amide.

27. (New) A method for preserving and/or storing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, comprising

- (a) preserving and/or storing the microorganism in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, wherein the total aldehyde concentration is in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM, and
 - (b) stabilizing, preserving and/or storing the at least one nitrilase enzyme activity by
 - (i) adding at least one inorganic salt at a concentration of at least 100 mM, and/or
 - (ii) adding metal salts whose metal cation functions as a nitrilase prosthetic group.

28. (New) A method for preserving and/or storing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, comprising preserving and/or storing the microorganism in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, wherein the total aldehyde concentration is in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM, and wherein the microorganism is of recombinant origin.

29. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the nitrilase enzyme activity is preserved for a period of up to 37 days.